

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-16 without prejudice.

Claims 1-16 (Canceled)

**17.** (Previously presented) A method of sterilizing poultry litter, the method the steps of:

- (a) holding poultry in confinement such that litter accumulates to form a surface;
- (b) transporting a flamer to the litter surface;
- (c) setting a flame to the burner such that the flame is contained within a hood;
- (d) heating the poultry litter sufficiently to kill microbes and bacteria; and
- (e) moving the flamer over the surface while heating the poultry litter.

Please cancel claim 18 without prejudice.

Claim 18. (Canceled)

**19.** (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the apparatus has a forward direction corresponding to a towing vehicle forward direction, the apparatus additionally comprising: An apparatus for sterilizing a surface, the apparatus having a forward direction corresponding to a towing vehicle forward direction, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) a hood for containing a flame;
- (b) an open inlet of the hood comprising a hood opening such that the hood is not sealed to the surface;
- (c) a plurality of burners situated under the hood;
- (d) a hitch for attaching said flamer to a tractor;

- (a) rake teeth disposed forward of the plurality of burners and under the hood; and
- (b) a barrier disposed between the rake teeth and the plurality of burners and under the hood.

Please cancel claims 20 and 21 without prejudice.

Claims 20-21        (Canceled)